

Information Act requests last year—the largest increase of any agency except for the Social Security Administration, which tripled its denials.

Fourteen months is a short time to change a bureaucracy charged with managing countless records. But a handful of agencies have already shown it is possible and committed to open government changes. On top of other positive reforms, the Departments of Agriculture and Justice, the Small Business Administration, and the Office of Management and Budget all increased how much information they released and decreased how many requests they denied last year. These agencies have embraced the spirit of transparency ushered in by President Obama, and as we mark Sunshine Week, I hope others will follow suit with their own innovative ways to increase transparency and spur citizen involvement. And once agencies adopt these practices, I hope they stick with them—not because they fulfill any Presidential directive but because they give us a better democracy.

TRIBUTE TO MITCH ALBOM

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, 25 years ago, an article appeared in the Detroit Free Press sports section headlined, “Give Me a Sporting Chance, And I’ll Give It Right Back.” It was the debut column from a young writer just arrived from Florida, and he admitted to some nerves about writing for his new audience. “Starting tomorrow, I ask your attention, your reaction, your letters, your laughter and, once in a while, the benefit of the doubt,” he wrote.

I doubt many Free Press readers knew that morning that they held the beginning of a journalistic legend in their hands. And the writer himself surely didn’t know what he was starting. But thousands of columns, millions of laughs, more than a few tears, 28 million books, and dozens of awards later, Free Press sports columnist Mitch Albom has become a Detroit institution right alongside the beloved athletes he has covered.

Recently, it was announced that Mitch Albom will receive the ultimate award for a sportswriter, the Red Smith Award from the Associated Press Sports Editors. Smith, the legendary New York writer, once said his demanding craft was really simple: “All you do is sit down at a typewriter and open a vein.” And Mitch Albom is a worthy successor to that legacy of writing with heart and emotion as well as style and precision. In thrilling victories and painful losses, fans of Michigan’s sports teams have seen 25 years of sports history through Albom’s observant eyes. They have gotten to know the State’s towering sports figures—be they heroic, tragic, or both—through Albom’s perceptive character sketches.

That careful attention to the human element of sports allowed Albom to

branch out into other areas. His “Tuesdays with Morrie” is one of the 100 best-selling books of all time. He is one of Michigan’s most listened-to radio hosts, and a regular on ESPN television. And as his success has grown, so have his contributions to his community. His charitable endeavors include efforts to help disadvantaged students study the arts, get health care to homeless families, and gather volunteers for worthy local service projects. Recently, he labored mightily and successfully to get aid to earthquake victims in Haiti.

In winning the Red Smith Award, Albom joins a list of the most honored names in sports journalism. The award speaks forcefully to the respect of his professional peers. For Michigan readers, however, Albom’s ongoing legacy is his remarkable writing on the games and athletes who are so much a part of our State’s identity and DNA and his contributions to improving his community. I congratulate him on this latest honor, and I thank him for 25 years of great journalism. The readers of Michigan and the Nation look forward to many, many years more.

TRIBUTE TO RON DZWONKOWSKI

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, it is a truism, a belief espoused by those of all political parties and persuasions, that the functioning of our democracy depends on an informed citizenry to make wise decisions at the ballot box and hold elected officials accountable.

That means our system depends on careful, thoughtful, impartial journalists, those who bring to their work as much passion for knowledge and understanding as we bring to our advocacy for policies we support. In that difficult and necessary work, few Michigan journalists have succeeded more than Ron Dzwonkowski of the Detroit Free Press, which is why the recent announcement of his selection to the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame is so well-deserved.

For nearly three decades, Dzwonkowski has served the Free Press as an editor, editorialist, and columnist. His professional peers have awarded him a host of awards, including a Pulitzer Prize and a National Headliner Award for work to which he has contributed. As an editor and writer for the Free Press’s editorial pages, he has shown a remarkable commitment to accuracy, but just as important, a remarkable passion for solving the problems of our city and State.

Whether he is praising an elected official or criticizing one, his writing is grounded in a thorough understanding of the facts and a commitment to looking out, above all, for the interests of Michigan’s citizens. His reporting, writing, and editing have made a significant and lasting difference in the lives of the readers he serves, and his selection to the State’s hall of fame for journalists is a much-deserved reward for a career of distinguished service,

one I hope will continue for many, many years to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BOB SCOTT

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the 80th birthday of a Maryland lacrosse legend, Mr. Bob Scott, a former Johns Hopkins University athlete, coach, and athletic director.

Lacrosse is the official team sport of Maryland and there is perhaps no other Marylander who has done as much for the game as Mr. Scott. His 41-year career at Johns Hopkins, spanning from 1955 to 1995, were years of great success for Hopkins lacrosse as well as Blue Jays athletics in general.

At a university that expects nothing less than dominance on the lacrosse field, Mr. Scott more than lived up to the high expectations. As the head lacrosse coach from 1955 to 1974, Mr. Scott left a legacy that will be hard to match. He led the Blue Jays to an unparalleled seven national championships, his players were recognized as first-team All-Americans an outstanding 42 times, and he left his position with 158 wins, more than any other head coach in program history.

Mr. Scott was a successful lacrosse player for Johns Hopkins from 1948 to 1952 as well. During his playing days, he received national recognition as the winner of the Penniman Award for outstanding play as a midfielder and as an honorable mention All-American.

In addition to his playing and coaching acumen, Mr. Scott also wrote the premier lacrosse book, “Lacrosse: Technique and Tradition,” written in 1976, still sits in lacrosse players’ lockers and on coaches’ desks to this day. The book has since been translated into other languages and has given Mr. Scott the vehicle to become the sport’s unofficial ambassador.

Mr. Scott is more than just a lacrosse legend, however. He helped build Hopkins into the division III powerhouse it is today. During his 22-year tenure as director of athletics, the Blue Jays emerged as national contenders in many different sports—including baseball, basketball, fencing, swimming, and soccer—and Mr. Scott played a pivotal role in successfully developing the women’s athletics program that continues to thrive today.

Most of Mr. Scott’s life has been dedicated to sports, but he also spent 2 years in the U.S. Army after graduating from Johns Hopkins. He rose to the position of instructor in the Ranger Department and was stationed at Fort Benning, GA.

In honor of Mr. Scott’s 80th birthday today—St. Patrick’s Day—I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the life of a great Marylander who has served our country and has given so much of his time to help mold our Nation’s student-athletes.●